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Struggle resumes in Tahrir Square

Egyptian masses defy military

By John Catalinotto

Nov. 21 — The masses have opened a new chapter in the Egyptian revolution. They have stood strong in Tahrir Square for nearly four days against bullets and gas demanding that the military regime, which succeeded President Hosni Mubarak last Feb. 12, step down.

As the day ended in Egypt, the Health ministry reported that 23 people had been killed and more than 1,500 wounded by the Egyptian army and police. But the people keep filling Tahrir Square.

As a result of the mass determination to stay in the streets, as well as the spread of the struggle to other Egyptian cities, the civilian government — that is, the politicians who provide a civilian cover to the U.S.-backed military — offered to resign. It was an important concession to the strength of the mass movement.

The struggle comes at a tense time politically because national elections are scheduled to begin on Nov. 28. People expect the Muslim Brotherhood to do well in the elections, since it is the best organized of the many groups that opposed Mubarak.

For this reason, the Brotherhood, after calling the first protest demonstration in Tahrir Square on Friday, Nov. 18, then called its organized forces off the streets so as not to give the military government

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IN U.S.

Occupations battle police evictions

If the mayor of New York City thought that he, his judge and his shock troops could put a halt to the Occupy Wall Street movement by raiding Zuccotti Park in the early hours of Nov. 15, he was wrong.

At 1:00 a.m., police brutally descended on the park with no warning and ousted activists, first pushing away reporters and camera crews. They threw computers, tents, expensive medical equipment, musical instruments, even individual's I.D. cards into sanitation trucks. Pets were confiscated or fled in fear. More than 200 people were arrested, including NYC councilperson Ydanis Rodriguez.

Undaunted, OWS protesters went to court early that morning and got legal approval to continue the encampment. But Mayor Michael Bloomberg looked for and later found a judge to do his bidding and decree that there were no legal rights for protesters and their camping equipment to stay in Zuccotti Park.

However, that evening OWS regrouped and held a General Assembly at Zuccotti Park. The city's repression had only made the protesters more resolute, and solidarity actions spread around the country.

On Nov. 17 OWS then organized a "Historic Day of Action for the 99 percent" with several events to celebrate the two-month anniversary of successful occupation. It started with actions at 16 subway stations in all the boroughs. Thousands of activists came to Wall Street, blocking traders from entering the Stock Market. Sanitation workers blocked a street with a truck in solidarity.

Labor unions, students marching from Union Square, and OWS groups, along with many other progressive and working-class activists — officially counted as 32,650 – from all five boroughs joined in a monumental march from Foley Square to the Brooklyn Bridge. The air reverber-

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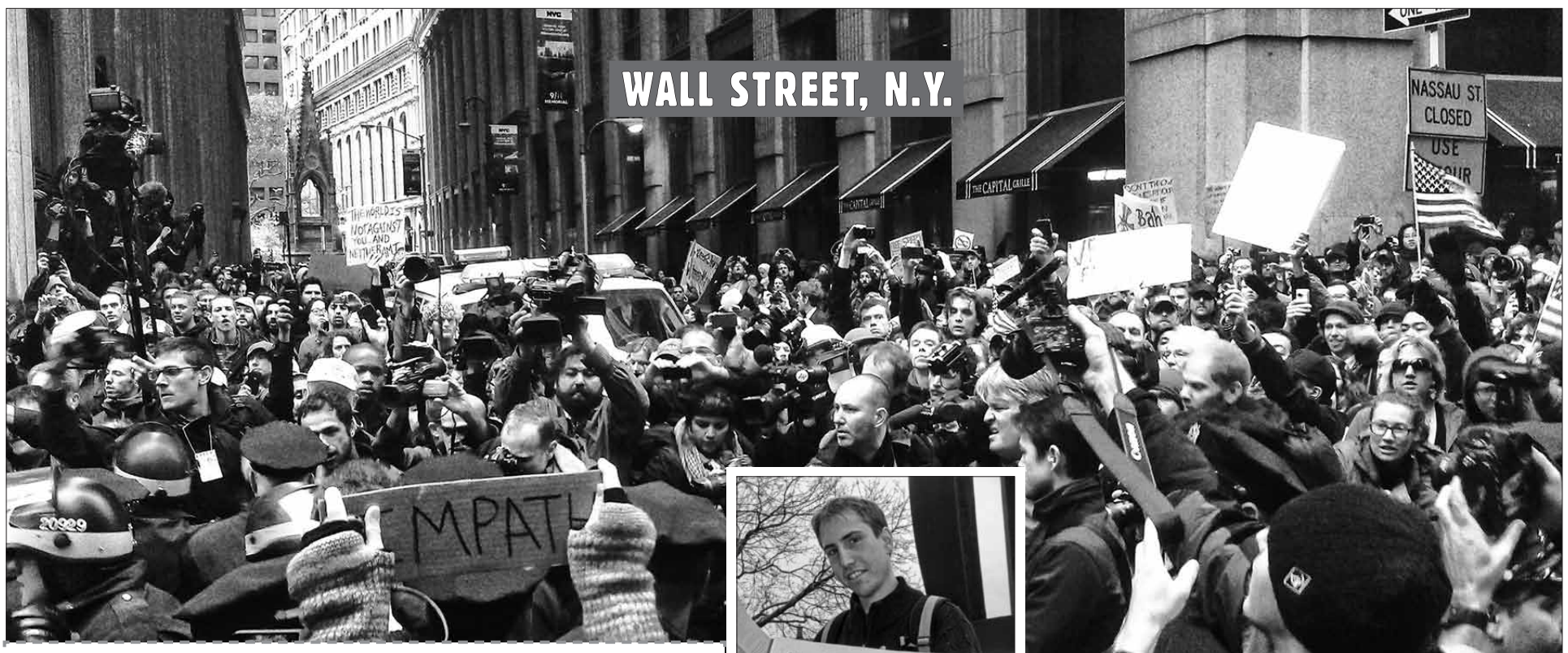


PHOTO: SAM TALBOT

Occupy movement tries to shut down the Stock Market.



MADISON, WISC.

A protester in Wisconsin who believes that recalling Gov. Scott Walker isn't enough.

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

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ARTIE ROSEN, ¡PRESENTE!

WWP ambassador for socialism & justice

By Edward Yudelovich
New York

Arthur "Artie" Rosen, a founding member of Workers World Party and a lifelong militant communist, passed away at the age of 82 from kidney failure on Oct. 3. A special memorial will be held at the Solidarity Center here on Dec. 4. Artie is survived by his daughter Rebecca.

Rosen was ahead of his time

According to WWP founding member Deirdre Griswold, Artie Rosen in the 1950s wrote a paper "Face to the Youth," advocating the creation of a youth organization in the U.S. oriented toward the working class.

A few years later, WWP put Artie's idea into practice with the formation of its youth group Youth Against War & Fascism. On Aug. 2, 1962, YAWF organized the first demonstration in the U.S. against the imperialist war in Vietnam. This protest was recognized and saluted by the great Vietnamese leader and revolutionary, Ho Chi Minh.

In June 1967, Artie, WWP and YAWF again were not afraid to swim against the stream, organizing the only U.S. demonstration protesting the June 1967 U.S.-Israeli war of aggression against the Arab and Palestinian peoples.

Artie, along with this reporter and many anti-Zionist Jews, were proud signers of a "Jews in Solidarity with Palestine" statement following the 2009 attacks on Gaza by the U.S.-sponsored Israeli war machine. The statement declared:

"We stand in complete and unconditional support for the self-determination of the Palestinian people. This includes the right to return to Palestine, from the river to the sea, and the right to democratically determine the form and the future of the Palestinian state. Nothing less will undo the historic crime of al Nakba — the 1948 catastrophe of the establishment of the state of Israel based on the ouster of the Palestinian people from their homeland, oppression and inequality.

"That crime betrayed the whole history of the Jewish people. From helping topple the czar in Russia and build the unions in New York, to resisting pogroms and fighting to the last breath in the Warsaw Ghetto, opposition to persecution, oppression and racism was central to the Jewish heritage. We call on Jewish people around the world, including those inside Israel, to join us in reclaiming that heritage."

Rosen walked the walk

But Artie did not just talk the talk; he walked the walk. Everywhere he went for decades he wore a cap displaying the Palestinian flag with the slogan "Free Palestine."

Sharon Eolis, a WWP leading organizer and a retired emergency room nurse who assisted Artie and was with him when he died, says: "Artie Rosen carried out the party's program in both theory and practice, from its inception to the present. Artie recruited to Workers World Party WWP Secretariat members Fred Goldstein and Sara Flounders, among others."

Fred Goldstein, **a**uthor of the book "Low-Wage Capitalism: Colossus with Feet of Clay," calls Artie a "communist propaganda machine." Wherever he went, he "enthusiastically upheld and understood the party line and relentlessly tried to recruit and propagate the ideas of the party and the revolution."



Artie Rosen, then active with Youth Against War & Fascism, helps defend 1965 Times Square anti-war protest from rightist attack.

Goldstein relates how, as a City College student in 1960 involved in supporting tenants' rights struggles in Harlem, he had listened intently to Artie's explanations about the party's formulations and positions, including WWP's unconditional defense of the right of self-determination for African-American and other oppressed peoples inside the U.S. He also introduced WWP's global class war perspective, including its orientation to defend the Soviet Union and the rest of the socialist camp against U.S. imperialism.

International Action Center co-founder Sara Flounders says: "Artie was a political activist for nearly 70 years, from the age of 15 or 16. He had the greatest dedication to getting out Workers World newspaper everywhere and engaging people in its message. He had his own paper route, distributing our revolutionary newspaper door to door, to newsstands, bookstores, on subways and to transit and other workers.

"Even hip replacement surgery did not stop him from getting the paper out at every demonstration in all types of inclement weather. He regularly brought activists with him to party meetings."

A role model for every comrade

Another founding WWP member, Rosemary Neidenberg, says of Artie**:** "So many things to remember. His wide, warm smile of greeting — the peacoat for winter, bellbottoms for winter and summer. He never was seen in public without political buttons like YAWF's trademark "Stop the War Against Black America," which later became available only in the archives and on Artie's jacket."

His comrade and good friend Brenda Sandburg says of him**:** "Artie had an extraordinary way of connecting with people. He was especially well known at the post office in New York. For years, he went there every week to drop off the shipment to subscribers. He would stop and talk to each worker and give them the latest issue of the paper. They were delighted to see him."

When this reporter visited Artie in the hospital during the last months of his life, the doctors, nurses and other hospital workers had been given their first copy of Workers World by Artie.

Che Guevara once said, "If you tremble with indignation at every injustice, then you are a comrade of mine." If ever there was a role model for a comrade, it would be Artie. Artie Rosen, ¡presente!

The memorial for Artie Rosen will begin at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 4, at the Solidarity Center, 55 West 17th St., New York.

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PHILADELPHIA

WWP holds Socialist Summit

By Michael Ladson & Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Under a banner reading “Abolish Capitalism! Fight for Socialism! We need a revolution!” the Philadelphia branch of Workers World Party/Mundo Obrero hosted a Socialist Summit here Nov. 19.

One focus of the conference was the impact that the Occupy movement has had on the political climate of the U.S. in exposing how the capitalist state defends the rich while using brutal police repression against the movement. Several Occupy Philly participants were among the more than 40 people gathered at Calvary Church in southwest Philadelphia.

Berta Joubert-Ceci, a Philly WWP leader and editor of Mundo Obrero, addressed this new struggle and the need to open people’s minds to the long history of struggle in the U.S. She discussed the birth of May Day as a workers' holiday and its revival in 2006, both times led by immigrants.

“This city is the home of Mumia Abu-Jamal, who has spent three decades in prison after being framed for the death of a cop by the infamous Philadelphia police and the city’s ruling class,” Joubert-Ceci said. “His case must be part of Occupy Philly’s agenda, which must take up the pervasive racism in a city where the majority are people of color.”

During the first panel of speakers, WWP First Secretary Larry Holmes raised the Occupy movement’s transitions since mostly white students first set up Occupy Wall Street at Zuccotti Park on Sept. 17. Holmes opened his remarks with a “Mic check” call to “abolish capitalism.”



Larry Holmes



Ramona Africa

WW PHOTOS: JOE PIETTE

“Now there is a movement to Occupy the Hood," Holmes noted, referring to the protests that have sprung up in Harlem, the South Bronx and cities like Oakland, Calif. “We need to Occupy for Jobs. While white youth started OWS, it will inevitably be the most oppressed who lead this struggle.”

“Occupy no longer says ‘Police are our friends’ like they did at the beginning,” Holmes stated, “The brutal police attack on Nov. 15 that violently evicted protesters, with over 70 arrests, has changed that. The ruling class made a decision to cut off the movement at the head, and Homeland Security directed mayors in over 18 cities to carry out suppression of local occupations.”

Holmes noted that the youth have shown great courage in initiating the occupations and their movement has opened a door to the possibility of an enormous jump in class consciousness. It has exposed the great class divide that exists with its slogan of “the 99 percent versus the 1 percent.”

“While there is a danger that the revolutionary potential of this movement could be channeled into the arena of presidential elections, the militant actions on Nov. 17 in response to the state’s repression brought tens of thousands into the streets.”

Creating basis for class unity

Fred Goldstein, a member of the Workers World Secretariat and author of “Low-Wage Capitalism,” described the Occupy movement as a reaction to an historic economic crisis that is “creating the basis for class unity in the crushing of all workers together.”

Goldstein described the general assembly format used by Occupy as a revolt against capitalist “democracy” that has only furthered income inequality and national oppression. He quoted Lenin on the state, asking, “Democracy for who and against who?”

Goldstein added historical context to underscore the OWS movement’s potential to open the way for revolutionary change in the U.S. He noted that the French Revolution started in 1789 when members of the emerging bourgeoisie occupied a tennis court in Paris to confront the economic control of the feudal monarchy.

A second panel included lively talks on what capitalism is; how it relies on racism and other forms of bigotry to divide workers; why socialism is the alternative; why we need a revolution; plus a special report on Palestine.

Panelists included Betsey Piette, a contributing editor from Philadelphia to Workers World newspaper; retired postal worker Joe Piette, who since Oct. 6 has used his free time to staff an activists’ table at the “Rosa Parks” tent at Occupy Philly; Darryl Jordan with the People of Color Caucus of Occupy Philly; LeiLani Dowell, a managing editor of WW newspaper; Sharon Black from the Baltimore branch of WWP and the All Peoples Congress; and Palestinian activist Susan Abulhawa, author of “Mornings in Jenin,” who described the heroic resistance of the people of Palestine as an example for all oppressed to follow.

A final panel with Jamila Wilson, of the Philadelphia Economic Advancement Collective; Ramona Africa, from the MOVE organization; Dr. Weldon McWilliams, of the Askia Coalition; and Godfrey Sithole, from the African National Congress discussed the struggle for jobs, against police brutality and repression, and the importance of international solidarity.

The final speaker on this panel, Scott Williams, a youth organizer with WWP’s Philadelphia branch, urged those in the audience to consider joining Workers World Party. Michael Ladson concluded the Summit by inviting people to take part in upcoming demonstrations, meetings and classes on Cuba and “What is Marxism all about” sponsored by WWP. □

Beyond the budget ‘crisis’

By Deirdre Griswold

Here’s a little secret that no one mentions as Democrats and Republicans joust over what to do about the federal budget: Every penny that the government spends, whether it’s on war and repression or on “entitlements” like Social Security and Medicare, comes from the sweat and strain of the workers.

Where else could it come from? Money, after all, is just a token we use to buy goods and services. When we work, we get money that we can exchange for the fruit of other people’s labor.

How do the bosses get their money? By withholding from us much of the value that we produce when we work. And what gives them this right? The system of capitalism, which is based on those who have capital exploiting those who have nothing to sell but their ability to work. The bosses don’t have to work — unless you consider bullying, cheating and conniving to grow their fortunes working. But that doesn’t produce anything of value, it just makes them richer.

The main function of government in capitalist society is to protect the ruling class and keep the process of exploiting labor moving along as smoothly as possible. However, capitalism is so efficient at making the rich ever richer — at the expense of the working class — that it is inherently unstable and vulnerable to mass rebellion. So part of what modern capitalist governments do is try to keep rebellions from happening not only with the stick but with the carrot.

These carrots — public education, Social Security, Medicare, libraries, parks and other services — weren’t just handed to us, however. They came only after huge struggles. Most of the “entitlements” people today may have taken for granted came after big strikes, sit-downs and demonstrations carried out at great sacrifice by workers and unemployed during the Great Depression.

No one can take them for granted any more. Both Republicans and Democrats have been discussing for months how to cut the federal budget, especially the part that deals with services — schools, post offices, environmental protection, public health and so on. Moreover, as Sen. John Kerry, a member of the appointed bipartisan “super committee” tasked with cutting the budget deficit, admitted on ABC’s Meet the Press on Nov. 20, the Democrats were willing to put everything on the table, including cuts to Social Security and Medicare.

As of Nov. 21, no deal had been reached. An across-the-board cut to every agency will automatically take place if there is no last-minute deal. But wait. There is already talk by politicians in both parties that our “national security” cannot be compromised by expecting the poor Pentagon to share in these cuts. After all, some exceptions have to be made — but not ones to keep people from starving or committing suicide because they’ve lost their incomes, their homes and their health care. No, what can’t be compromised is the security of the transnational banks and corporations as they go around the world paying starvation wages and sucking raw materials out of oppressed countries — many of which have been invaded by U.S. troops at one time or another.

The Democratic senators on the super committee are saying that no deal on the budget was reached because the Republicans wouldn’t allow the Bush tax cuts for the rich to expire. But what if the Republicans had agreed to that? Would the deal have been good for the workers?

No deal is really good that cuts basic services that people need to function in today’s world and at the same time lays off millions of workers — all in the name of balancing the budget.

The Institute for Policy Studies has just come up with a budget that it says would cut the deficit by $824 billion a year by raising taxes on the rich, reducing money for war and ending government subsidies to polluting industries.

There’s no chance the U.S. capitalist government will do these things, but the IPS study makes it clear that the budget “crisis” is not one of shrinking resources. It is really a crisis imposed on the workers by the two parties of big business.

The real crisis is this: Capitalism has hit a wall and is unable to function without massive infusions of money. Financial institutions have taken trillions of dollars from the government since 2008 without it making a dent in unemployment. When people aren’t working, no new value is being produced. No matter how you cut it, this crisis won’t be over until capitalism is dead and buried. □

‘Conversation on Capitalist Crisis’

Leading up to the Socialism Summit in Philadelphia on Nov. 18, a “Conversation on the Capitalist Economic Crisis” was held at the Arch Street Methodist Church near Occupy Philly. The event featured Workers World Party Secretariat member Fred Goldstein, author of “Low-Wage Capitalism,” and Dr. Anthony Monteiro, lecturer in African-American Studies at Temple University. Monteiro is known for his work on W.E.B. Du Bois.

Goldstein and Monteiro conducted a wide-ranging conversation, covering everything from the new period of working-class struggle introduced by the Occupy movement to the question of what is needed to address the systemic problems of capitalism — left Keynesianism or revolution. The event was hosted by the Philadelphia Economic Advancement CollectivE (PEACE) and Workers World Party. PEACE organizer Jamila Wilson facilitated the discussion.



Fred Goldstein



Jamila Wilson



Dr. Anthony Mateiro

— Betsey Piette

DETROIT

Gov't threatens more cuts in services, wages

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire
Detroit

Corporate-backed Detroit mayor, Dave Bing, has again threatened to enact massive layoffs and further cuts in city services in response to a "secret audit" report issued by the accounting firm Ernst and Young. In a Nov. 16 press conference, Bing said that the audit report indicated that the city would "run out of cash" by next spring.

Bing further stressed that if municipal unions and the people of Detroit rejected a new round of workforce reductions, a scale-down in employee benefits and the gutting of services, he would request a review of the city finances by the Republican governor, Rick Snyder. A state law passed last spring provides for the appointment of an "emergency manager" in fiscally distressed cities, counties and school districts with the power to abrogate labor contracts, impose austerity measures and expropriate municipal pension funds.

Detroit city workers last year had a 10 percent wage reduction. There have also been cuts in health care programs for employees and their families.

City public services have been devastated over the last several years as Detroit seeks to stay above water amid massive debts that require escalating payments purportedly owed to the banks.

Already 2,000 civil service positions have been eliminated and the mayor and City Council are debating whether to lay off an additional 1,000-2,000 workers.

The existing pay cuts provided for a two-day mandatory furlough every month without pay. Now city workers are being ordered to report to work on these days while maintaining the existing 10 percent pay reduction.

Also the public lighting and bus systems have been stretched to the limit with the need for major reinvestment. Thousands of street lights are broken with no plan for repairing them.

The absence of street lights even on major thoroughfares is jeopardizing the health and safety of the population. Bing is threatening to privatize the lighting department by turning over the management to the multi-billion dollar DTE Energy corporation where Bing served as a board member for many years.

Over 250 buses are off the streets due to the lack of spare parts. The city administration has refused to hire mechanics or provide overtime for the existing workforce to make the necessary repairs. Unions representing the bus drivers and mechanics have come under fire by the administration falsely reporting that it is they who are responsible for the absence of functioning buses.

Bus services are so bad that many workers who rely on the buses cannot get to their jobs on time. Some have publicly stated that they lost their jobs due to the bus transportation crisis.

In a city already suffering from an official unemployment rate of over 25 percent, hundreds of thousands of students, senior citizens, unemployed people and those fortunate enough to be still working rely on the buses to get to schools, jobs, doctor's visits and the search for employment.

Occupy Detroit demonstration against austerity

On Nov. 17, the Occupy Detroit movement joined in with the national day of protest against austerity by holding a rally in downtown Detroit.

A representative of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shut-offs spoke outside City Hall calling for the repayment of over $200 million in state revenue sharing funds that is owed to Detroit.

In addition, Moratorium NOW! is demanding that there be increased federal funding for public transportation in order to get the buses back on the street as well as the purchasing of new vehicles and the building of a long-delayed light rail system.

Moratorium NOW! also urged the mayor and City Council to appeal to the federal government for a financial bailout. In 2009, the Obama administration forced General Motors and Chrysler into bankruptcy in order to bail out the auto companies.

Emergency funding from the federal government, the suspension of debt-service payments to the banks and an increase in corporate taxes could easily resolve the current financial crisis.

Moratorium NOW! has played an instrumental and supportive role within the Occupy Detroit movement. For example, the Occupy Detroit movement has called for a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions.

Occupy Detroit has also held demonstrations against the cutbacks in public transportation and for the cancellation of student debt. Moratorium NOW! played an important role in the formation of a labor working group which organized a demonstration on Nov. 6 that attracted over 700 people from various unions and community organizations.

Moratorium NOW! and the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice have held their regular meetings at Occupy Detroit in Grand Circus Park as an act of solidarity with the heavily youth-led Occupy Detroit movement. Some of these young activists have expressed interest in working with Moratorium NOW! on an ongoing basis.

Women speak out at Occupy Wall Street

The Occupy Wall Street movement at Zuccotti Park in New York City heard the powerful voices of women activists, the majority of them immigrants from Latin America, at a rally organized Nov. 20 by a broad coalition led by Women Workers for Peace and La Peña del Bronx.



WW PHOTO: ELLEN CATALINOTTO

The rally focused on the epidemic of violence, including domestic violence, against women that is systemic in capitalist society worldwide. Translated into Spanish and English, the rally showed spirited solidarity with Occupy Wall Street. Confrontation by growing police and other state repression has not stopped OWS from opening up important political space for women, especially those impacted by the global capitalist economic crisis, and issues of special concern to women, including jobs, deportation, childcare, health care, housing, education, racism, sexism, war and occupation, and more.

Speakers at the rally included Nieves Ayress, a Chilean activist and founder of La Peña; Lucy Pagoada, a New York City school teacher and member of the Popular National Resistance Front of Honduras; and Monica Moorehead, a representative of the Women's Fightback Network and the International Women's Alliance.

— New York WW bureau

On the Picket Line

By Sue Davis

Labor shortage in Wash. apple groves caused by low wages

Apple growing is big business in Washington state, bringing in a whopping $1.5 billion yearly. But this year a labor shortage was so extreme that one grower agreed to pay $22 an hour for prison labor. After Department of Corrections expenses for guards, transportation and housing, the prison workers will be paid the minimum wage of $8.67. (Seattle Times, Oct. 31) But when 50 members of the United Farm Workers showed up for a job reportedly paying $13 an hour, they were told a different story. They would only be allowed to pick one bin, which paid $22. But it takes the average picker about three hours to pick one bin, which comes to $7.33 an hour, or less than the minimum wage. UFW Regional Director Jorge Valenzuela told the Yakima Herald-Republic that wages have declined over the past five years from about $30 a bin. "Every year it has gone lower for us farm workers." (Nov. 4) No wonder he objected that the state, instead of supporting the right of farm workers to earn a decent wage, was making prison labor available.

Verizon workers march to Occupy D.C. to end 'corporate greed'

Even though the Communication Workers and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers agreed to end their strike against Verizon on Aug. 20, the 45,000 workers are finding creative ways to link up their struggle for a decent contract with the Occupy movement sweeping the country. On Nov. 16, CWA members began a two-day march from a Verizon store in Silver Springs, Md., heading for Occupy DC in the capital city's McPherson Square the next day. The march is part of CWA's national week of action "to focus attention on Verizon's attempt to cut good jobs and workers' benefits while posting record profits and avoiding its fair share of federal taxes." Along the route the marchers held rallies and performed street theater exposing Verizon's corporate greed. At Occupy DC, they joined many other unions and occupiers who marched on the Key Bridge. That action was part of the AFL-CIO's national call to create jobs by rebuilding the country's sagging infrastructure. (Union City, Metro Washington Council AFL-CIO, News online newsletter, Nov. 18)

Union sues NYC over school staff layoffs

District 37, part of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees union, sued New York City's Department of Education on Nov. 16. The union claims that the layoffs of 672 school aides, parent coordinators and other support staff "were unnecessary and discriminatory because of their disproportionate impact on schools that serve poor students." The workers, who are among the city's lowest paid, were laid off on Oct. 7 "in a move that union leaders have described as political payback for their refusal to let the city tap a health care fund run by labor groups to close the budget gap last spring." The lawsuit brought by eight laid-off plaintiffs, all of them Black or Latina women, pointed out that there were no layoffs of aides in schools on Staten Island, few in wealthy areas like the Upper East Side or TriBeCa, while 17 aides lost jobs in the very poor Brownsville area of Brooklyn and 46 were let go in two very poor districts in the South Bronx. (New York Times, Nov. 16)

NYC school bus drivers' union fends off mayor's attack

In a move calculated to arouse fear and hostility toward New York City's unionized school bus drivers, billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg issued a statement Nov. 18 calling for alternative plans in case the drivers strike. (New York Times, Nov. 19) Amalgamated Transportation Local 1181 President Michael Cordiello countered Bloomberg with a statement Nov. 19 exposing the mayor's change in policy that would eliminate "experienced, well-trained [union-organized] employees in favor of companies who are simply seeking to provide bare-bones service at the lowest possible cost." Cordiello called this "a risky, ill-conceived public policy that directly threatens the safety and security of our children. ... When it comes to school children the Mayor should be more concerned about safety, not just cutting costs." The community group Parents to Improve School Transportation, which demands safe, on-time bus service for all children who must ride school buses, stands by the unionized drivers, who include members of Teamsters Local 854.

32BJ wins raises for D.C. area janitors

Less than 24 hours before their contract was set to expire on Oct. 30, District of Columbia area commercial office cleaners won an agreement with a wage increase. The contract negotiated by Service Employees 32BJ covers 5,000 janitors in D.C. proper, 4,000 cleaners in nearby Virginia, 1,500 workers in nearby Maryland, and more than 700 janitors in Baltimore. Valerie Long, 32BJ vice president, called this "an important victory for cleaners" that is part of the union's campaign for good jobs on the East Coast. (Justice for Janitors, Nov. 2)

Interview with participant in L.A. Occupy blockdown

Service Employees Local 721, Occupy LA participants and community organizations marched to Bank of America Plaza in downtown Los Angeles Nov. 17. Police arrested 27 activists at a morning blockdown and 46 more in the afternoon. We interviewed one of those arrested, John Parker, who has been representing Workers World Party at the occupation at City Hall.



WW: Why did you participate in this action?

John Parker: This was Occupy LA's boldest action so far in conjunction with the union movement. This was also part of national actions called in solidarity with Occupy Wall Street protesters, who had just been brutalized by the police, to demand jobs and to fight against austerity. The unions emphasized the demand for jobs.

The march ended at a major intersection by the freeway ramp bleeding into the financial district of downtown LA at rush hour, stalling traffic into downtown. Occupy LA partnered with SEIU Local 721 for this action.

The large police presence threatened massive violence with military weaponry and formation against unarmed civilians. It was inspiring to see the participants, including many union members, willing to be arrested, and that probably inspired greater participation of Occupy LA participants later that day where 46 people, I among them, were arrested in defiance against the police and the banks they protect.

WW: What were you doing when you were arrested?

Parker: Occupy LA planned to set up tents on the grassy area of the bank plaza. I was on one of the four front lines organized to protect the tents' perimeter. We eventually faced the boot-clad, 8-inch-steel-tear-gas-pellet-wearing, military-assault-weapon-bearing, club-gripping cops. The cheers of other protesters outside the grassy area encouraged us. We also realized that the many TV cameras and reporters present were helping to magnify the significance of occupying a bank. This helped steel our courage as we locked arms in solidarity with each other and our class.

During the three hours we waited on that front line to get arrested, we had a great dialogue about the role of the police, our message and the importance of using the media to define and clarify the message that is most helpful to push the movement forward, especially when cameras were rolling, resulting in one of the main chants being "Jail the bankers, not the occupiers."

WW: What is the character of the Occupy LA movement?

Parker: Inspired by Occupy Wall Street, the movement in LA began with an anti-bank, anti-corporate and, perhaps by a majority, anti-capitalist character. Most were youth new to politics and activism, but just recently hit by the economic crisis. No jobs.

More people of color have been joining. Some create their own occupy groups or hold actions in oppressed communities; some join the general assembly and affinity groups. Still, most here at Occupy LA are white. However, their strongest supporters have been the unions, especially the service worker unions like SEIU with a predominantly Black and Brown membership. Union participation has made the largest demonstrations predominantly people of color.

WW: How does this composition affect the movement's direction?

Parker: We have been trying from the beginning to see how we can help build unity among the Occupy LA forces and the oppressed communities and their organizations and unions. The history and background of most occupiers here and the influence of those dominating the General Assembly are obstacles. It's important for the movement to understand issues like police brutality that so heavily affect the everyday experience of especially communities in East Los Angeles and South Central. Otherwise you'll lack the ability to create any sort of solidarity with those communities.

If you say you're for the 99 percent, then you should say that the plight of the most oppressed sector of the 99 percent is vital.

WW: Are there any specific examples of this attitude?

Parker: Sometimes the movement has raised chants that praise the police, calling them part of the 99 percent. Really, the police are the protectors of the 1 percent. These are the same people in uniform who abuse and repress your sisters and brothers in East LA and South Central. If you call them your protectors, your heroes -- even saying that you love them, you're sending a hostile message, albeit unintended -- to Black and Latino/a people everywhere.

I'm not being rhetorical. Many times these are literally the same exact cops who carried out military-style assaults on my community in South Central, sometimes on my own block. Or they were involved in the horrific number of killings of Black and Latino/a youths in Los Angeles. Los Angeles Police Department policy is a daily nightmare of humiliation and terror.

To call those same cops your heroes means you ignore their atrocities and complicity in those atrocities, and more dangerously, you encourage those and future atrocities. Appealing to the cops sabotages solidarity with the most important sectors of the 99 percent, whose membership in any movement for social progress is indispensable.

WW: What has Workers World done here to help encourage solidarity?

Parker: We've been active in building and participating in affinity groups and even helped form a committee in the General Assembly. We've shown a film on building socialism in Cuba. In partnership with BAYAN-USA we've held a teach-in on the economic crisis and the necessity of building international solidarity to help define who are the movement's strategic allies, what defines the working class, and given the universality of the jobs issue, capitalism's drive toward greater unemployment.

We know the action of people in the struggle is primary in building their consciousness. We've made sure to participate and help build the marches and actions at Occupy LA. Currently we're initiating an action Nov. 23 to shut down an auction in Norwalk with the theme "We need jobs, not foreclosures" to coincide with the national Occupy 4 Jobs campaign kickoff. □

The Oakland General Strike leads to a new call for Dec. 12

By Dave Welsh
Oakland, Calif.

The writer is a retired union letter carrier and longtime activist in the Bay Area.

When the masses of people are in motion, watch out. They may just be chipping away at the foundations of the old established order, while you ain't looking!

Take, for example, the Oakland General Strike on Nov. 2 , which was an all-day festival of people taking power into their own hands. First, many thousands surged through downtown, sidewalk-to-sidewalk, and shut down the four major downtown banks (with many trillions of dollars in assets). Then, when the crowd had grown to 30,000-plus, they poured into the Port of Oakland in three giant waves and shut down the entire port, the fifth-busiest in the country. When is the last time something like that happened here in the United States?

Okay, maybe it wasn't a "traditional" general strike, like 1934 in San Francisco or 1946 in Oakland or like the general strikes today that regularly paralyze Greece, where the labor movement is strong and militant.

But every general strike is different. And in a country where only 7.2 percent of the private-sector work force even belongs to a union — 12 percent including public workers — where organized labor has been on the defensive for the last 30 years, absorbing bruising concessions, two-tier wage scales, runaway shops and now Wisconsin-style union-busting — for us, the Nov. 2 Oakland General Strike was like a breath of fresh air.

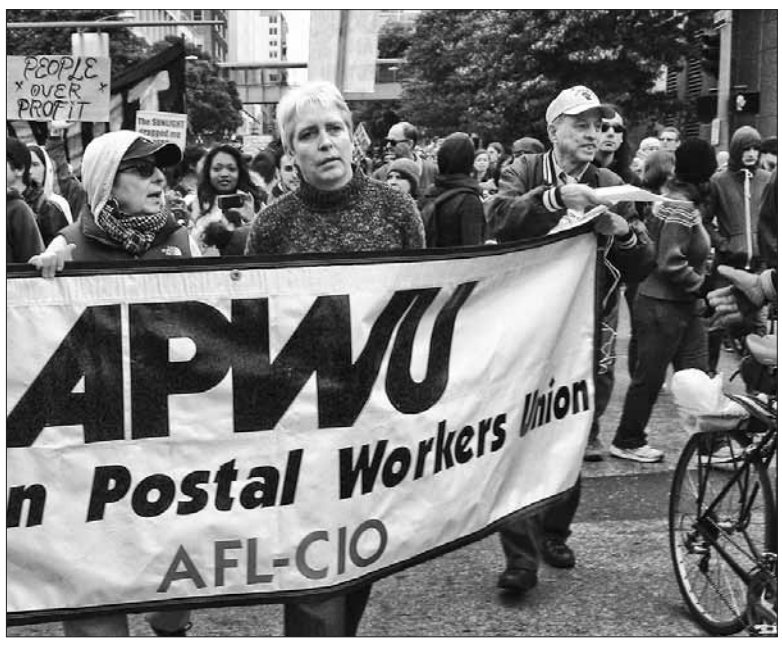






PHOTO: TERRI KAY, ABOVE AND TOP RIGHT; RIGHT, PHOTO: BILL BOWER; BELOW, DELORES LEMON THOMAS



The Nov. 2 General Strike not only had pretty good support from the city's major unions — 350 unionized Oakland teachers reported to the streets that day, not to work! But it brought into the streets thousands of low-wage workers and their families, youth and students, the unemployed and the foreclosed-upon of all races and nationalities, mostly not in unions because there are no longer or not yet any unions there for them — an outpouring of the many faces of today's suffering U.S. working class — and a sign that this sleeping giant may just be awakening from its slumber.

You could say it was a general strike "of a new type," reflecting not only the temporarily diminished power of the unions, but also the changed character of the working class in the U.S., and one that is starting to make common cause with oppressed communities, that is beginning to take bold collective action to defy our adversaries in the 1 percent.

Now Occupy Oakland has called for a coordinated West Coast Port Shutdown on Monday, Dec. 12, in solidarity with longshore workers in Longview, Wash., who are fighting to preserve the union there. The call is for Occupy movements in each port city and port truckers to participate in the coast-wide "12/12" action.

The first leaflet conveyed the fighting spirit of this young movement: "Together we are unstoppable." □

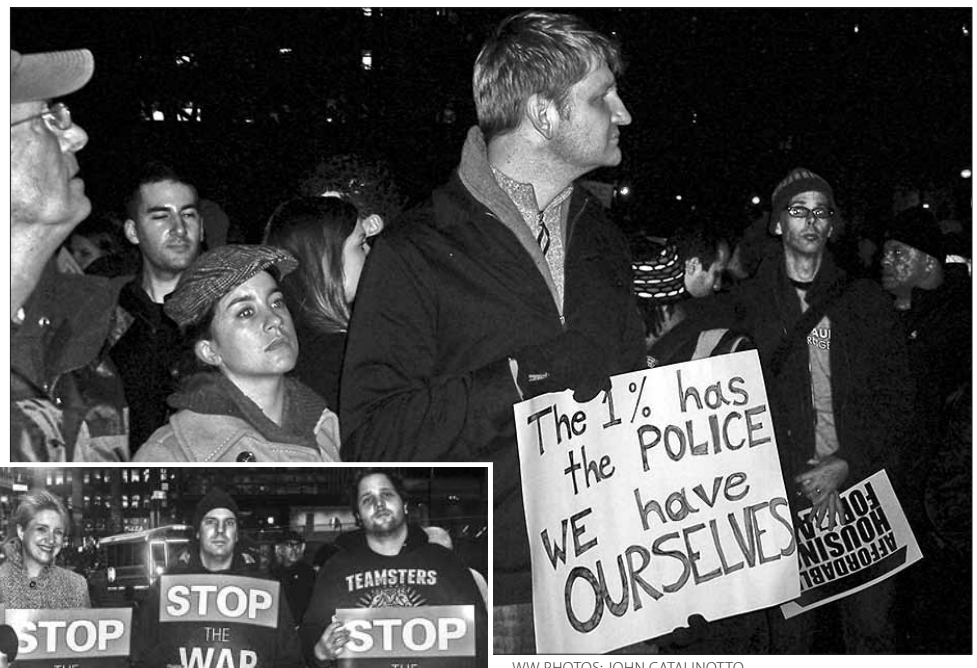
In U.S. occupations battle police evictions

Continued from page 1

ated with chants of "Shut the city down"!

That day the police ramped up the repression once again, and brutally raided Zuccotti Park, hitting people with batons, penning them in, arresting and dragging out some OWS activists who were sitting there.

However, OWS has made it clear it is not dispersing. The movement is regrouping and making plans, and may be changing locations, but plans on organizing ongoing actions to represent the 99 percent. A General Assembly Nov. 18 discussed plans for people's assemblies whether or not there are encampments, flash mobs, "occupy squads," which would target locations including banks, and more, with a view to indoor venues during the winter months.





WW PHOTOS: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Three days after the assembly held at the SEIU building, OWS showed Bloomberg they are not acceding to his or Wall Street's demands. They gathered near the mayor's townhouse, chanting and playing drums, pots and pans.

Additionally, on the same day, Nov. 21, there was also a Solidarity Demonstration with Adelante Alliance and an event featuring Elders from the Civil Rights Movement in Zuccotti Park.

Nov. 23 is "Deficit Deadline Day," when the congressional supercommittee, Wall Street's proxies, are supposed to submit a plan to cut $1.2 trillion from the federal budget over 10 years on the backs of working and poor people. The Occupy-4Jobs Network is calling a march to demand, "Jobs not Cuts," which will gather at Zuccotti Park at 4 p.m.

— Kathy Durkin

OCCUPY DETROIT

Protest austerity

On Nov. 17, Occupy Detroit activists and their supporters linked up with representatives of city unions to hold a picket and rally outside City Hall in downtown Detroit.

About 150 people marched around the building chanting, "[Mayor Dave] Bing says cutback, we say fightback!" Representatives of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 207, which represents water utility employees, called for the city to halt further pay reductions and layoffs.

— Abayomi Azikiwe

OCCUPY OAKLAND

Police continue attacks; activists continue resistance

Dan Coffman, president of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 21 in Longview, Wash., spoke at the Nov. 19 rally in Oakland, Calif. Their local is in support of a call for a West Coast Port Shutdown on Dec. 12. Meanwhile, school children at Lakeview Elementary, one of five Oakland schools scheduled to be closed, also rallied on Nov. 19.

A new Occupy Oakland encampment was destroyed by Oakland police on the morning of Nov. 20. Undaunted, an emergency general assembly was held at Oscar Grant Plaza that evening, focusing on both the most recent attack and the port shutdown. Some are urging the re-occupation of Oscar Grant Plaza, which Occupy Oakland renamed in honor of the young Black man killed by Oakland transit police in 2009.

— Bill Bowers & Terri Kay



OCCUPY DULUTH

Demands high-speed rail

At a Nov. 17 rally sponsored by Occupy Duluth, Minn., presentations supported efforts to build the "Northern Lights Express," a high-speed rail for the region. Labor, student and community members then marched to City Hall for a speakout and picket line.

— Photo & caption by Bryan G. Pfeifer

OCCUPY WISCONSIN

On the move in many fronts

On Nov. 19, a 40,000-strong demonstration kicked off the Recall Gov. Scott Walker campaign at the state Capitol in Madison. For hours, streets surrounding the Capitol were packed with poor and working people outraged at Walker's union-busting bill and state austerity budget. Labor, community and student contingents held a roving picket line, then a major rally on the Capitol steps. An anti-capitalist Jobs Not Cuts rally took place at the nearby Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce headquarters.

A massive protest at Walker's suburban home was held Nov. 15, the day official signature gathering began. To recall Walker, 540,000 valid signatures are needed within 60 days; by Nov. 19, volunteers had already gathered more than 100,000 signatures.

On Nov. 17, hundreds of people shut down the Interstate 43-North Avenue Bridge. Four were arrested in this powerful, multinational, youth-student-led act of resistance, which demanded that members of the communities be hired to fix thousands of bridges.

The protesters drew many sympathetic residents of this majority African-American neighborhood; unemployment is well over 50 percent in Milwaukee's African-American community. Protesters then marched to the annual meeting of the Milwaukee Inner City Allied Congregations for Hope.

On Dec. 3, the Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement is hosting a People's Organizing Meeting in Milwaukee. A special section of the meeting will be on Occupy Wall Street. Free and open to the public, the meeting will take up BOPM's Occupy 4 Jobs campaign, fighting police brutality, immigrant rights, youth-student issues, a moratorium on foreclosures, opposing imperialist wars and the NATO/G-8 conference in Chicago in May.

Numerous progressive organizations are involved, including Occupy The Hood and other Occupy Wisconsin movements, as well as BOPM organizers from Chicago, Detroit and New York City. Visit www.wibailoutpeople.org or email wibailoutpeople@gmail.com.

— Bryan G. Pfeifer



WW PHOTOS: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

OCCUPY ROCHESTER

Hub of organizing

Following Occupy Rochester's recent victory that meant it could occupy Washington Square Park 24/7, the movement is rapidly organizing to increase its outreach and political influence.

With more than 25 tents and growing, the movement has been working overtime to meet the encampment's varied needs. Cultural events are frequent, and there is even a free lending library. The movement has a strong online presence, including livestreaming of most events. Plans are underway to sustain the encampment through the harsh Rochester winter. The occupation has welcomed a number of homeless people, who have joined the movement.

Occupy Rochester is rapidly becoming a center for progressive political organizing in the region. Eighty people from Occupy Rochester and other labor and community organizations demonstrated in front of the offices of Wells Fargo on Nov. 14, demanding a halt to the impending foreclosure/eviction of a Latino family, Harold Streidel and Maria Streidel.

On Nov. 16, more than 150 people rallied at the park, which has been renamed Liberation Square, in solidarity with the Occupy protesters who were violently evicted in New York City and around the country. Organized labor was significantly represented. A highlight was an announcement by Harold Streidel that Wells Fargo had suspended its eviction order and that the Fannie Mae attorney handling the case had been fired.

On Nov. 17, a busload of labor activists and occupiers traveled to Albany, N.Y., to lend support to the beleaguered occupation there and to pressure the state government to extend the millionaires' tax.

That evening, about 40 people withstood snow to discuss the role of the police in society. The meeting was organized by the Occupy Rochester anti-oppression working group, which has also produced a leaflet for outreach to the oppressed communities.

— Gene Clancy



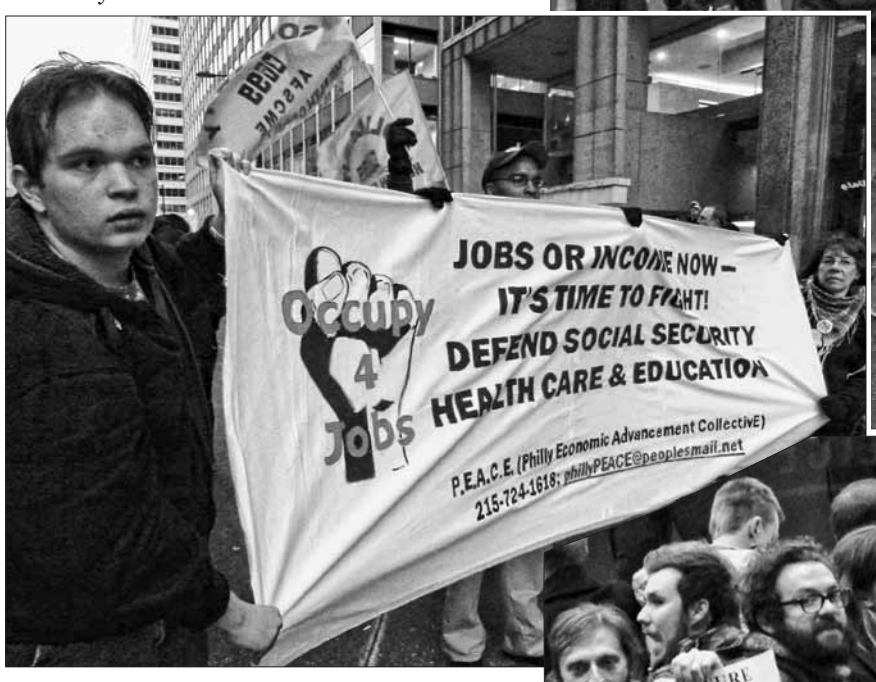
WW PHOTO: ERIC STRUCH

OCCUPY PHILADELPHIA

Resists threats

A dozen members of Occupy Philly spoke at a Nov. 14 press conference refuting Mayor Michael Nutter's political attacks on the growing occupation. City officials have been threatening to dismantle the tent city at City Hall.









WW PHOTOS: JOE PIETTE

That same day, hundreds of UNITE HERE members and supporters marched from Occupy Philly to Aramark Headquarters to demand a new contract. Among the major issues are fighting reduced hours, wages and benefit levels.

Some 800 people marched from Occupy Philly to the Market Street Bridge on Nov. 17, calling for jobs to repair failing bridges across the U.S. Twenty-four protesters refused to move off the bridge and were arrested.

—Report and photos Joe Piette

OCCUPY BUFFALO

Takes on foreclosures

Occupy Buffalo marched on the suburban office of New York state's biggest foreclosure mill, Steven J. Baum PC, on Nov. 15 with an angry demand for it to be shut down. "Today we are working on dismantling the Wall Street foreclosure machine in New York state," demonstrators shouted over the "people's mic." The company handles 40 percent of all mortgage foreclosures statewide.

Protesters demanded that attorney Steven J. Baum's license be revoked and that he be prosecuted for the law firm's illegal foreclosure practices. Pictures released to the New York Times of a 2010 Halloween office party revealed Baum staff, ridiculing the firm's victims by dressing up as foreclosed-upon homeless people. The demonstration was greeted with honks of support from many drivers in the passing rush-hour traffic.

— Ellie Dorritie

W. MASSACHUSETTS

Action shuts down two banks

In Amherst, Mass., about 85 protesters, mostly students from surrounding colleges, gathered in the town Commons, then marched to a Bank of America branch at the town's main intersection. After spirited and lively chants, the protesters went into the bank and "mic-checked" a written statement to Bank of America expressing solidarity with the workers in the branch and with Occupy movements around the country. It ended with the words, "Bank of America, you've been served!"

When the activists left, the bank immediately raised its shutters, closing for the day. A group of about 40 protesters walked into the street and blocked the main intersection.

Someone then suggested, via a mic check, that they do the same action at Nations Bank across the street. The whole group complied. They then marched to Amherst College and on to the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

— Catherine Donaghy

RALEIGH, N.C.

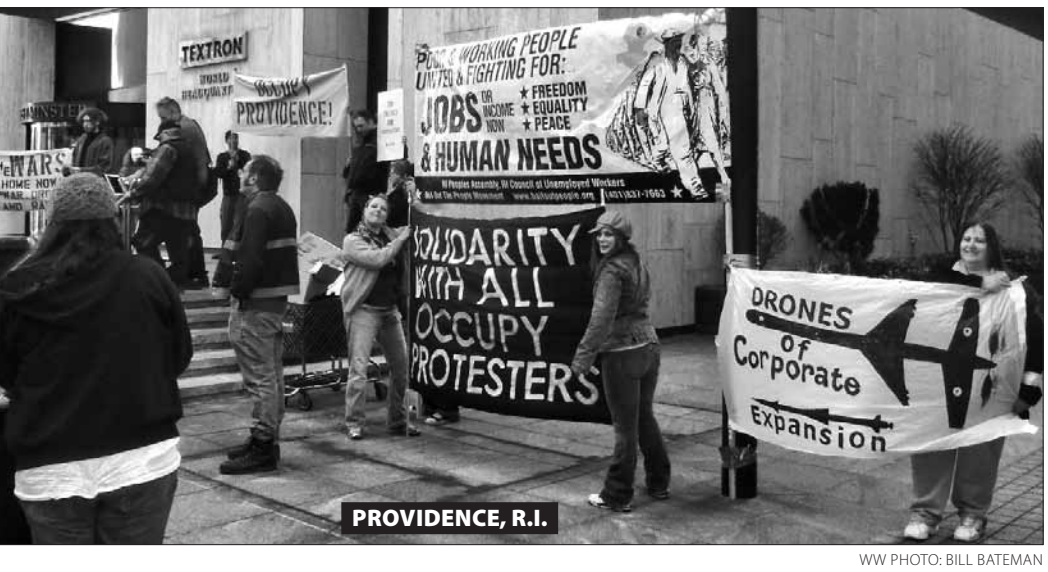
Activists demand jobs, defend occupation

On Nov. 17, nearly 200 workers, students, unemployed people and community supporters gathered at the U.S. 1 Highway overpass bridge on Peace Street near downtown Raleigh to demand a public works program to create millions of jobs. Recently, the North Carolina Department of Transportation announced plans to replace the Capital Boulevard Bridge by the year 2016; yet they are still planning on laying off as many as 400 workers this year. The rally was organized by the North Carolina AFL-CIO in support of Occupy Raleigh and the national occupation movement and to demand jobs for all.

Participants then marched from the bridge to the state Capitol building, where Occupy Raleigh members have valiantly held onto a permanent sidewalk occupation despite attacks by the Raleigh Police Department, in which a total of 28 people were arrested.

Occupy Raleigh has demanded the right to assemble on state property, which has been repeatedly denied by the Department of Administration. The Raleigh City Council has also refused to grant the occupation a space. Yet this has not deterred the occupiers, who still hold strong on the sidewalk.

— Dante Strobino



PROVIDENCE, R.I.

WW PHOTO: BILL BATEMAN

Occupy Ft. Benning

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Columbus, Ga.

Thousands of demonstrators attached a large banner reading "Occupy Ft. Benning" to the tall barbed-wire fence separating them from base property here on Nov. 19.

Each year the crowd becomes more youthful and diverse as a more globally conscious generation learns about past and current graduates of the infamous U.S. training school for Latin American officers. The government renamed the School of the Americas the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. But that couldn't hide the crimes of SOA trainees.

These include numerous massacres of peasants and Indigenous communities, targeted assassinations of union and religious leaders, coups against elected governments, wholesale suppression of civil liberties, mass detentions and "disappearances." From Argentina and Chile to El Salvador and Honduras, the people refer to SOA as the "School of the Assassins."

The SOA Watch, initiated by Father Roy Bourgeois in 1990, was motivated by the Nov. 16, 1989, murder of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her teenage daughter by El Salvadoran soldiers, many of whom were trained in counterinsurgency tactics at the SOA.

Determined to close the training school and change U.S. foreign policy based on domination and militarism, SOA Watch has organized protests, held fasts, lobbied Congress, and educated and inspired thousands to become activists. Over the years, dozens of people have crossed onto the base in violation of federal law and served six-month prison sentences.

This year, 43-year-old Theresa Cusimano climbed a ladder propped against the fence and dropped down onto the grounds of Ft. Benning. She had been arrested and imprisoned in 2008 for a similar act of civil disobedience at the base.

The annual two-day SOA weekend consisted of a full schedule of workshops, films, meetings and a concert. A much-anticipated giant puppet parade completed the range of activities on Nov. 20. The action at the gates of Ft. Benning closed with a solemn procession of thousands who responded with the Spanish word "presente" after the names of hundreds and hundreds of victims killed by SOA-trained soldiers were intoned from the stage. For more information, go to www.soaw.org.

Protest at Stewart Detention Center

On Nov. 18, the day before the protest at Ft. Benning, some 270 people walked 1.5 miles in the fifth annual march and vigil at the Stewart Detention Center in nearby Lumpkin, Ga. Built and operated by Corrections Corporation of America, it is the largest privately run prison in the country, holding more than 1,900 men awaiting deportation.

There, activists heard Emily Guzman and Pedro Guzman tell of their ordeal with the immigration system. Pedro was held at Stewart for over 19 months, while Emily used the legal system and public pressure to win his release. "Free Pedro Guzman" was the main demand at the 2010 protest. Pedro described the many violations of basic human rights — from lack of medical care and poor food to guard misconduct and inadequate legal help. Both Emily and Pedro appealed to the crowd to continue to fight for immigrant rights and an end to private prisons.

Marching behind a bright yellow banner that read "No More Profits Off Our Pain! Shut Down Stewart Detention Center!" a contingent of women from Dalton, Ga., held a cord to which the names of more than 900 men from their town were attached. These workers — spouses, fathers, brothers, uncles, friends — had all been detained at Stewart and/or deported just in the past year from this north Georgia town, home to many carpet manufacturing and poultry processing plants. □

U.S. renews imperialist offensive in Asia

By Gene Clancy

In a coordinated military and diplomatic offensive, the U.S. government moved this week to challenge China and bolster its hegemony over Asia and the western Pacific. Both President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton were traveling through the region and making deliberately provocative moves toward China.

Obama made the militarist intentions of the U.S. perfectly clear. "The United States is a Pacific power, and we are here to stay," he declared in a speech to the Australian Parliament. He vowed to expand U.S. influence in the Asia-Pacific region and "project power and deter threats to peace." (CBS News, Nov. 16)

Then Obama announced the deployment of U.S. troops near the northern Australian city of Darwin. Even before he arrived, Australian demonstrators protested the increased U.S. presence with signs reading "No bases!" and "Pine Gap is too much," referring to an already existing joint U.S./Australian spy base nearby.

Lawyer Diana Rickard said an influx in the number of U.S. troops in Darwin would make the community less safe. "We do not want American Marines in Australia doing the same things they have done in the Philippines, in Japan, in Germany and probably in most parts of the world where they have a military base," she said. "We do not want the violence to spread." (news.msn.com.au, Nov. 17)

Both in Australia and later in Indonesia, Obama clearly signaled that China stood as a barrier to U.S. intentions.

In the Philippines, Clinton stood on the deck of a U.S. warship in Manila Bay and reaffirmed the 60-year-old unequal Mutual Defense Treaty between the U.S. and the Philippines.

Clinton's visit was met by militant demonstrations. Her cavalcade was pelted with balloons filled with red paint.

Referring to the treaty, Secretary General of BAYAN Philippines Renato Reyes Jr. said: "There is no reason to celebrate 60 years of the Cold War relic that is the MDT. This agreement is a lasting testament to the unequal and one-sided ties that bind our two countries."

Goals of U.S. imperialism

A turn toward a new U.S. strategy in the Asia/Pacific region was clearly outlined in a recent article by Clinton in Foreign Policy magazine. In an essay entitled "America's Pacific Century," she asserts, "The future of politics will be decided in Asia, not Afghanistan or Iraq, and the United States will be right at the center of the action." (November)

Clinton clearly states the reasons for this new turn: "With Iraq and Afghanistan still in transition and serious economic challenges in our own country, there are those on the American political scene who are calling for us not to reposition, but to come home ... [but] we cannot afford not to.

"Harnessing Asia's growth and dynamism is central to American economic and strategic interests and a key priority for President Obama. Open markets in Asia provide the United States with unprecedented opportunities for investment, trade, and access to cutting-edge technology. Our economic recovery at home will depend on exports and the ability of American firms to tap into the vast and growing consumer base of Asia."

In the same article, Clinton also makes clear that the U.S means to secure these economic advantages with military force:

"We are modernizing our basing arrangements with traditional allies in Northeast Asia ... while enhancing our presence in Southeast Asia and into the Indian Ocean. For example, the United States will be deploying littoral combat ships to Singapore. ... And the United States and Australia agreed this year to explore a greater American military presence in Australia. ... We are also looking at how we can increase our operational access in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean."

Some 110 years ago, the U.S. was equally forthright in declaring why an imperialist policy was not only desirable but necessary:

"[T]oday, we are raising more than we can consume, making more than we can use. Therefore we must find new markets for our produce," wrote Albert Beveridge in "The March of the Flag." (historytools.org)

However, there are some important differences. In 1898, the U.S. was a rising imperialist power while China was broken and oppressed, dominated by a bevy of imperialist countries.

Today, U.S. capitalism is racked by a worldwide economic crisis, while China is strong and independent.

The Chinese response to Clinton's essay was defiant. Referring to Clinton's claim that "the United States is back," the People's Daily of Oct. 18 remarked:

"'The United States is back' is a famous phrase of Douglas MacArthur. The U.S. general, who once lost to the Japanese army during the Pacific War, said these words to announce the success of the U.S. counterattack when landing on the territory of the Philippines again. Today's Asia is totally different from what it was six decades ago."

Nevertheless, the U.S. represents a real danger, not only to China but to the entire world. It is a nuclear-armed military giant that is willing to subject its own people to increasing misery and threaten the entire world in order to defend its dying system.

It is important that people everywhere be vigilant and prepared to resist imperialism whenever and wherever it appears. □

Threat of imperialist war: how Occupy movement must react

Excerpts taken from a talk by WWP Secretariat member Sara Flounders at the Oct. 8-9 Workers World Party National Conference in New York City.

There are unique moments in history when people's consciousness becomes a material force, an explosive and even revolutionary force. What was for too long acceptable suddenly becomes intolerable.

It is why our revolutionary workers party exists in the U.S. We always consider how to push and help to grow an emerging movement in the direction of revolutionary change. We focus on how to involve the most oppressed. They will be the most determined force because they have the most at stake in change.

After years of passivity in the face of unrelenting attack on U.S. workers' lives, jobs, homes and futures, there is a beginning response. Millions of people are becoming aware that capitalism has no solutions, no jobs and no recovery on the horizon.

Imperialist war is a danger to the new Occupy Wall Street movement. The racism and right-wing reaction that accompany every imperialist war are the greatest threat to every progressive movement and to every gain that worker struggles have won. War is the weapon that the bourgeoisie uses to destroy class consciousness and allow reaction and fear to take hold.

Imperialist wars since 9/11 strengthened the forces of political reaction and repression. Homeland Security, the FBI, CIA and Immigration and Customs Enforcement coordinate with local police in entrapment, intimidation, frame-ups, raids and deportations. They will threaten the OWS movement as they already threaten people of color, especially immigrants, Muslims, and anti-war and political activists.



Sara Flounders

PHOTO: WORKERS.TV

In this new movement, politics and demands take on great importance. We've contributed by raising the campaign to "Stop the racist execution of Troy Davis" and by moving anti-war demonstrations to Wall Street with slogans like "Wall Street = War Street" and "We need jobs, not war and racism." Racism and war are the essence of capitalism.

The ruling class — the bourgeoisie, the owners of capital — has centuries of experience in destroying class consciousness and rerouting workers' demands into channels that don't challenge their ownership of everything in society. They aim to funnel movements into safe, electoral channels, and they are sophisticated at using racism and reaction to divide and disorient a section of the population.

Imperialist wars are a dagger pointed at the movement here. Wars are meant to — and have succeeded in the past at — dividing and even causing workers' movements to collapse.

Recent U.S. imperialist wars have been spectacular failures and have not repositioned U.S. power. After 10 years in Afghanistan, the U.S. position is worsening. The most powerful weapons in history have not prevailed against one of the world's poorest and least developed countries.

The U.S./NATO war in Libya was a desperate attempt to push back the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions and move aggressively into Africa. Immediate collapse was predicted in Libya, but heroic resistance went on for seven months through non-stop U.S./NATO bombing and unimaginable destruction, targeting the civilian infrastructure.

U.S. imperialism is driven to war, and can't do without it, even though the imperialists are less able to prevail. Their failure to reverse their deteriorating global position will propel these predators to larger adventures. We don't know if the next war will be against Syria, Iran, Sudan, Korea, Venezuela or China.

In the center of this empire that has tentacles worldwide, we need to help this emerging movement to develop an automatic reflex to imperialist war propaganda, and not to believe the racist demonization that is used to justify a war or the hype about democracy or "humanitarian intervention."

Educate the movement

Too many political activists are taken in, confused and disoriented, echoing the corporate media. We must educate this movement to focus on the outrageous crime being committed by the Pentagon's giant death machine and refuse to accept any justification for the attack.

Activists must refuse to side with a racist attack, whether in response to an imperialist war of aggression or a lynch mob, a police attack on an oppressed community or a boss's attack on a union. No one should join an orchestrated vilification campaign that blames the victims.

Stand in solidarity with all oppressed people under attack. That must be ABC.

If the U.S. corporate media, the White House and the State Department praise a struggle, a leader or a movement as a liberating force and claim a struggle is for democracy, be suspicious. They only want corporate domination.

Even if we disagree with some policies of a regime that U.S. imperialism targets, we should refuse to accept the bogus justifications for U.S. involvement.

The whole world is following what is happening at Wall Street and in U.S. cities. Our party can contribute a lot based on our experience in past struggles and on our class understanding of the international capitalist system.

Let us do all that we can to build and defend this new movement. □

MUNDO OBRERO

Ocupar Oakland

Continua de página 12

¡Derecho de los/as trabajadores/as a organizarse!

¡Impuestos para los ricos!

¡Un sueldo nacional digno!

¡La verdad en los medios masivos!

¡Alto a la brutalidad policial!

¡Anulen la ley Taft-Hartley!

¡Cumplan todos los derechos civiles!

¡Garanticen las pensiones!

¡Anulen la Ley Patriota!

La Huelga General y Día de Acción Masiva en Oakland el 2 de noviembre fue

After destroying Libya

Imperialists escalate war in Somalia

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The Western-orchestrated military effort to defeat the Islamic resistance group Al-Shabaab in Somalia is bogged down, despite the deployment of the most modern weapons against this people's movement.

On Nov. 18, the Kenyan government announced it had requested greater U.S. military assistance in its campaign to liquidate Al-Shabaab in southern and central Somalia.

During the same week the Ethiopian army reportedly crossed the border into Somalia once again in an effort to assist both the U.S. and Kenya. Kenya had launched a land invasion into Somalia in October aimed at capturing Al-Shabaab bases in the southern region and ousting the resistance movement from the strategic port at Kismayo.

In addition, the leaders of Uganda and Kenya traveled to Israel for a high-level meeting to request its assistance in the Somalia war. Both Israel and the United States have had economic and military ties with Kenya, formerly a British colony, for many years.

France also entered the war in Somalia during October. Its naval vessels reportedly bombed areas in the south of the country. Despite a denial from Paris, Kenyan military spokespeople confirmed the French intervention.

The Pentagon has recently stationed drones in Somalia. Air strikes have been carried out on a daily basis resulting in the deaths of hundreds of civilians. Washington supplies funding, arms and training for the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM). This army of so-called "peacekeepers" has 9,000 Ugandan and Burundian troops, largely based in the capital of Mogadishu, to bolster the U.S.-backed Transitional Federal Government regime in the city.

Kenyan invasion stalled

Reports from the battlefield in Somalia indicate that the Kenyan military intervention is not going well. Conditions of heavy rainfall and the lack of combat experience are hampering the efforts to dislodge al-Shabaab from key towns in the south where it has built up fortified positions with support from the local population.

The Los Angeles Times reported Nov. 18 that U.S. officials were considering providing military surveillance and reconnaissance, "which could include imagery from drone aircraft."

The U.S. has been a major player in Somalian affairs since the late 1970s, when the Carter administration persuaded former leader Mohammed Siad Barre to break ties with the Soviet Union and ally Somalia with Washington. At that time Washington's main target in the region was the revolutionary government in Ethiopia supported by the former USSR and Cuba.

With U.S. blessings and support, Somalia invaded Ethiopia's Ogaden region in 1978, trying to annex the territory, but was defeated. This failed expansionist adventure began the unraveling of the regime in Somalia. Later, in 1992 under the first Bush administration, thousands of Marines were sent into Somalia ostensibly to provide "humanitarian" assistance to drought-stricken people. The intervention was quickly exposed as an invasion. A popular uprising forced their withdrawal by early 1994.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the revolutionary government of Mengistu Haile Mariam in Ethiopia was pulled down. His successor, Meles Zenawi, has maintained close ties with Washington. Zenawi ordered troops into Somalia in late 2006 to support U.S. aims in the region.

Despite large-scale assistance from the Pentagon, the Ethiopian military was defeated by the resistance forces, led at that time by the Islamic Courts Union.

This latest push into Somalia by the combined forces of Kenya, France, the U.S., Ethiopia, AMISOM and Israel is clearly designed to make this strategically located Horn of Africa nation a base for imperialist intrigue. The U.S. Africa Command, known as AFRICOM, already has a base in neighboring Djibouti. So does France. A similar outpost in Somalia would strengthen the overall objectives of the Western capitalist states: to secure East Africa as a continuing source of oil, raw materials, shipping lanes, tourism and cheap labor.

Parallels to Libya war

The recent overthrow of the government of Col. Moammar Gadhafi in Libya has set a dangerous precedent on the African continent. The U.S./NATO bombing campaign and support for rebel forces has provided an opening for further penetration of AFRICOM elsewhere on the continent.

In Somalia, the Kenyan and AMISOM forces, along with a newly formed army under the control of the TFG, are bogged down in a quagmire. By escalating U.S., French, Israeli and Ethiopian military engagement, the imperialists are searching for a formula to consolidate their hold over the region. As in Libya, this militarization will inevitably lead to further exploitation and impoverishment of the masses.

In Libya, U.S., British and French oil firms and other corporations are eager to exploit the vast oil and natural gas reserves. Under Gadhafi, the nationalization of oil resources gave Libyans the highest standard of living in Africa. Today, social programs that guaranteed free education, health care, housing subsidies and women's equality are being systematically abolished, with the blessing of the U.S. and the NATO countries.

The use of drones, fighter aircraft, naval vessels, CIA and MI-6 operatives along with NATO-led rebel military forces on the ground sealed the fate of the Gadhafi government. A similar strategy is being utilized in Somalia, with total disregard for its impact on the people.

With the nationwide crackdown on the Occupy Wall Street movement, the U.S. is seeking to crush opposition to its program of austerity at home and imperialist war abroad. Anti-war organizations and the burgeoning anti-capitalist movement in the U.S. must raise demands against increasing military interventions in Africa. These wars drain resources away from the working class, the oppressed and youth here in order to enhance the power and influence of international finance capital. □

U.S. promotes assassination threats against Iranian scientists

By Sara Flounders

The International Atomic Energy Agency made public the names of Iranian nuclear scientists in a new report released this week. Publishing their names makes these scientists targets for assassination.

This unprecedented violation of international guidelines, and of the IAEA's own Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, is the most menacing proof to date that the agency is not even superficially a neutral U.N. body that monitors nuclear weapons. Showing the agency's bias, IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano met with the White House before meeting with U.N. officials on this latest report.

Several Iranian scientists have already been killed by bombs and drive-by shootings. The secretary general of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, Mohammad Javad Larijani, says the U.S. and Israel were behind the murders.

Exposing that these targeted killings are considered acceptable practice, U.S. presidential candidate Newt Gingrich declared that Washington is seeking to stop Iran's nuclear program through maximum covert operations, including the assassination of scientists.

U.S. CIA or Israeli Mossad agents have also carried out virus attacks on the computers of legal Iranian centrifuges, explosions at Iranian industrial sites and continuing acts of sabotage. All this is part of an ongoing U.S. war that attempts to set back Iran's development as a modern, self-sufficient country.

A new round of demands that other countries join in sanctions against Iran comes at a time of increasing crisis and upheaval in the region. The impact of an intractable capitalist economic crisis turns Pentagon war planners in an increasingly threatening direction.

The IAEA report was leaked to the press before its official release. Rather than presenting information from the agency's countless inspections in Iran, it repeated discredited allegations originally made four years ago regarding a laptop computer "found" by U.S. authorities. The laptop supposedly showed Iran's "intention" to construct atomic warheads.

The leak of the report follows a bourgeois media frenzy over a wild claim that Iran was planning to execute a Saudi ambassador in Washington, D.C.

Most ominous are the media reports of a possible Israeli military attack on Iran. Israel is totally dependent on U.S. financial, diplomatic and military aid to survive. Any attack on Iran could occur only with U.S. authorization and overflight clearance of regions where the Pentagon has controlled the sky for decades.

The right to develop nuclear energy

Like every other country, Iran is guaranteed the right to develop and acquire nuclear technology. Iran is also a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Today, at least 30 countries have nuclear power plants. According to the IAEA's most recent "International Status and Prospects of Nuclear Power" report, another 65 countries "are expressing interest in, considering, or actively planning for nuclear power." (iaea.org, March 2011)

But only Iran has faced every form of attack to block development of a nuclear energy program.

Every Iranian nuclear facility is under 24-hour-a-day surveillance by IAEA cameras, and Iran has not one nuclear weapon. Yet the U.S. continues to demand that Iran stop the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, because it could potentially lead to a nuclear weapon sometime in the future.

The IAEA does not criticize, attack or demand inspections of the more than 10,000 nuclear weapons that the U.S. holds, nor of the hundreds of nuclear weapons developed by Israel.

The bogus charges of Iraq having weapons of mass destruction to justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq — despite years of total monitoring of every industrial plant in Iraq — confirms that no inspection can satisfy Washington's demands.

Sanctions on Iran's oil refineries

The most recent U.S. sanctions are not focused on nuclear research. Instead, they are an attempt to hamper Iran's petrochemical industry.

Iran nationalized its production of oil after a revolutionary upheaval drove U.S. and British imperialism out of Iran in 1979. Since then, every effort has been made to destabilize Iran and regain the vast wealth that once flowed into Western banks and corporations.

Due to its past unequal relation with imperialism and the years of sanctions since, Iran has had to import large amounts of refined oil and petroleum products, from gasoline to jet fuel, cooking gas and more. In 2008, Iran still had to import nearly 40 percent of its market needs.

However, after completion of seven new refineries and improvements to existing refineries, Iran is now almost self-sufficient in oil refining needs. This is why the U.S. is so determined to again block Iran's refining capacity by hampering all forms of international investment.

As this entire resource-rich region continues to slip from U.S. imperialism's control and domination, the danger of a Pentagon-inspired provocation against Iran escalates. All those who oppose imperialist war should be on heightened alert. □

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más que un solo día de protesta contra la dominación corporativa, el poder y la represión policíaca. Fue un día de resistencia que interrumpió el flujo del comercio y el cierre de los bancos y el Puerto. Fue un ejemplo para otros movimientos de Ocupaciones para que continúen por todo el país. La Asamblea General de Ocupar Dallas ya ha llamado a una Huelga General de Dallas que tendrá lugar el 30 de noviembre de 2011. □

Nota: La mañana del 2 de noviembre, el artista progresista de rap en Oakland, Boots Riley, y Clarence Thomas dieron una interesante entrevista sobre los acontecimientos del día de la Huelga General de Ocupar Oakland en el programa Democracy Now! en www.democracynow.org

WORKERS WORLD editorial

Free Leonard Peltier

The so-called "Thanksgiving"holiday will mark the 42nd commemoration by Native peoples of the National Day of Mourning in Plymouth, Mass. The event is once again dedicated to Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier.

This "holiday"is a reminder of the brutal policies that European colonizers —and then scores of U.S. governmental administrations —have carried out against Native peoples for centuries: the genocide of millions, the theft of their lands, and the relentless assault on their cultures and languages.

The true history of the treatment of Indigenous peoples shatters the myth of benevolent European "Pilgrims"generously sharing food with this country's original inhabitants. It reveals systematic injustice, bigotry, terror and violence directed against the Indigenous peoples.

At this year's commemoration, as is the tradition, Indigenous people honor their ancestors, speak about their history and struggles throughout the Americas, and demonstrate their international unity. They tell of their efforts to survive today under an unjust system in the face of so many forms of discrimination.

Their oppression has not ended. Government and corporate policies still discriminate against and exploit Indigenous peoples. Additionally, the economic crisis has taken its toll: In many areas of the country, more than half of Native workers are unemployed or have given up looking for work, while often the jobs, when they are available, pay low wages and have few benefits. More than a third of Native people live in poverty.

This capitalist government is paying trillions of dollars for weapons and military aggression, and for bailouts to banks and other financial institutions, while the superrich get off tax-free. The priorities should be reversed. Jobs and other human needs should come first. The members of Congress who vote on the federal budget should guarantee living-wage jobs, adequate health care, education and all essential services to all members of Native and other oppressed and working-class communities.

The National Day of Mourning also celebrates the political strength of Native peoples in fighting back. For example, participants in this annual commemoration have come in strength, even burying the Plymouth rock in sand several times. Historically, Indigenous peoples have militantly organized and acted to demand their political, economic and social rights, and for the recognition of their sovereignty and right to self-determination.

Millions of people here and worldwide are today demanding Leonard Peltier's freedom. This ailing political activist has been unfairly imprisoned for nearly 36 years, having been railroaded to jail on charges that he shot two FBI agents. The prosecution withheld evidence from the defense, among many other violations of Peltier's civil liberties.

The 67-year-old Peltier was recently moved from Lewisburg, Pa., to the U.S. Penitentiary in Coleman, Fla., 2,000 miles from his nation, the Turtle Mountain Band in North Dakota. His supporters are demanding that he be moved to a facility at Oxford, Wis., closer to his nation and family.

Petitions containing 12,000 signatures calling for President Barack Obama to grant Peltier clemency have been sent to the White House, but there has been no response.

On this National Day of Mourning, Workers World Party stands in solidarity with and honors all Indigenous peoples. We join in their call for an end to all forms of racism, inequality and oppression. Additionally, we unite with our Native sisters and brothers in demanding freedom for our hero-in-the-struggle, Leonard Peltier. □

ALASKA

Global warming disrupts Native life

By Paddy Colligan and G. Dunkel

Global warming has hit the Arctic region hard, making the lives of the Native peoples living along the coast of Alaska in isolated communities that depend on hunting and fishing for their survival much, much harder.

In the second week of November, a blizzard whose intensity, tidal surges and wind-driven waves weather forecasters have not seen for decades, hit western Alaska. Forecasters compared its power to Hurricane Irene. It was a thousand miles wide. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicted that some areas of western Alaska would get 10 to 18 inches of snow.

The village of Shishmaref, located on a narrow barrier island just off the coast, had voted to move years ago after a series of lower intensity storms ate away one end of their village, threatening over a dozen houses. The move would cost over $180 million. People have lived at the present location of Shishmaref for over 4,000 years.

Kivalina, another coastal village north of Shishmaref and also located on a barrier island, is especially vulnerable to tides and storm surges. Volunteers had to struggle through hurricane-force, howling winds to ferry villagers to the village school, the most solidly built structure in Kivalina. (Anchorage Daily News, Nov. 9)

As sea ice has diminished, taking longer to form in the fall and departing earlier in the spring, its dampening effect on the waves and storm surge that come with blizzards is lessened, increasing their impact. Warm weather also lessens the strength of the permafrost so that waves pounding on the shore do more damage. (Climate Central, Nov. 8)

Since the sea is warmer, shore ice hasn't formed yet, and the villagers in Shishmaref and on other small islands have no access to the mainland to hunt for caribou and moose, a major part of their subsistence food supply.

Global warming not only affects ice forming, it also means the waters in the northern Pacific are warmer. That allows more energy to be transferred from the water to the air, making storms more powerful and changing their tracks further north, so they strike the Chukchi Sea, part of the Arctic Ocean, which has its own storms.

Oil exploration companies planning to locate their rigs on the northern and western coasts of Alaska are obviously worried about the problems these storms will pose, since they are forecast to intensify and more of them will last longer. But that hasn't stopped the companies from getting exploration licenses and drilling test pits in search of a big payoff. □

Struggle resumes in Tahrir Square

Egyptian masses defy military

Continued from page 1

a pretext to postpone the elections, according to an AP report today.

However, the reports in the U.S. corporate media are unreliable. Until WW can get reports from independent, working class sources, it is best to review information that is reasonably reliable.

Last January and February, a massive uprising upended the Mubarak regime, surprising the world. The imperialist governments, in this case mainly the U.S., supported the general staff of the Egyptian army, with whom the Pentagon has had close relations since the late 1970s.

The New York Times calls the Egyptian army "longtime American allies and beneficiaries whose power survived Mr. Mubarak's departure." (Nov. 21) Washington looked to the officer corps to make cosmetic changes but to keep the old system virtually intact. It may be possible for the mass movement to win over the rank-and-file soldiers, but the upper officers are tied to the ruling class and to imperialism.

Now U.S. officials are worried. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said earlier in November that "If, over time, the most powerful political force in Egypt remains a roomful of unelected officials, they will have planted the seeds for future unrest, and Egyptians will have missed a historic opportunity." (New York Times, Nov. 21)

Along with the military, the Muslim Brotherhood, as the best organized force and one that did not challenge property relations, is expected to play a role in the new government.

There is also a secular opposition both to Mubarak and to the military regime. This opposition has some elements that are conciliatory to imperialism and others that are decidedly anti-imperialist, and includes a minority of Marxist and other pro-socialist forces.

The imperialists and the Egyptian military have often tried to incite hostility between the Islamic and secular forces, or between Muslims and Coptic Christians. However, the latter have blamed the government, not the Muslims, for attacks that led to deaths within their community, like the dozens killed by security forces Oct. 9.

In this latest demonstration, secular forces joined the demonstration originally called by the Muslim Brotherhood. Coptic Christians stood guard in Tahrir Square against the army while the Muslim demonstrators took time out to pray. (New York Times, Nov. 21)

Both inside and outside these organizations are the tens of millions of workers and other poor people in Egypt, in unions or not, who have been the motor force of the revolution. None of their basic demands, that is, the social demands for higher wages, more social benefits, etc., have been won yet.

These powerful mass forces impact on all the organizations. Their demands cannot be won through any government that conciliates with world imperialism. This next phase of the Egyptian revolution has just begun.

Mexican workers strengthen Tijuana Conference

By Cheryl LaBash

"A social movement strong enough to force change." That statement could describe the Occupy Wall Street movement, but it refers to the struggle of Mexican electrical workers and Mexican miners in Cananea, Sonora. Leaders from these struggles will open the 8th U.S./Cuba/Mexico/Latin America Labor Conference on Dec. 2 in Tijuana, Mexico.

Mexican Electrical Workers (SME) leader Humberto Montes de Oca and National Miners Union Section 65 Secretary-General Sergio Tolano Lizarraga will be joined by representatives from the Cuban Workers Central Union (CTC), the World Federation of Trade Unions-Americas Region, the Central Workers Union of Brazil (CTB), and the Workers Interunion Plenary and National Workers Convention of Uruguay (PIT-CNT). Exchanges with U.S. Occupy participants and recognition of completion of the three-day Workers School that precedes the Tijuana Conference are also planned.

Reflecting a renewed effort to free the Cuban Five, unjustly held in U.S. prisons for more than 13 years, this year the conference solidarity evening with the Five is moved to Saturday, Dec. 3. A musical tribute to the Cuban Five by young Tijuana Opera singers, a presentation by anti-war personality Cindy Sheehan, and a viewing of the new video, "Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up?" aim to inspire increased union action on this important effort.

Registration and hotel information are available at LaborExchange.blogspot.com or send an email to LaborExchange@gmail.com. □

Free the CUBAN 5



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Fernando González Llort
Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez and René González Sehwerert

What is socialism?

The following is excerpted from a talk by WWP Secretariat member Deirdre Griswold to the Oct. 8-9 Workers World Party National Conference in New York City.

The Occupy movement is showing how many agree with us that capitalism is destroying the lives of millions. But what should replace it? We say socialism. What is socialism?

To begin with, it's a social system that guarantees for everyone what we're not getting under capitalism: decent jobs or income, health care, education, a place to live, an end to invasions, wars and occupations. It's all possible when we "occupy" everything and produce for people's needs, not to profit the very, very rich few.

People know in their bones that this economy can produce all these things and more. There's an abundance of everything. Nine million empty housing units, enough for every homeless person! Plenty of land and food. High-tech factories producing at only 60 to 75 percent of capacity.

There's a surplus (the bosses say) of people with all kinds of skills, from teaching to nursing to computer programming.

Material basis for socialism

Everything that workers in this country need could easily be produced under socialism just by putting everyone to work — not just producing things but fixing the infrastructure, cleaning up the environment, providing much better services and more.

We're Marxists. We say that capitalism is now increasingly paralyzed because the technology is so developed that everything can be produced in abundance with fewer and fewer workers. This is called a capitalist crisis of overproduction — but it has laid the material basis for socialism. And not just for this country. The technology is rapidly advancing everywhere. The whole world, which today has billions of people in poverty, could quickly satisfy all human needs under socialism.

So why don't more people know — yet — that socialism is the answer?

I want to talk about Sam Marcy, the founder of this party. What made him stand out from all other leaders of his period is that he took on the hard questions. He took on the problems of the socialist countries. He didn't try to sweep anything under the rug. And he used Marxism to unravel where their difficulties came from.

Sam didn't talk about socialist countries as though they were perfect. But he analyzed the problem — and the problem wasn't Leninism. It wasn't the building of a party that could lead a workers' revolution to victory and set up a state to defend that revolution.

Sam didn't shirk from criticizing policies that did great damage to class solidarity and opened the door to capitalism and imperialism. But he always made sure we understood that this degeneration in the leadership occurred because of the great difficulties they faced. He often posed it this way: What would we do if we were facing these problems? And he never gave up on the gains made by these revolutions, from Russia to China.

The struggle for a better world began way more than a century ago. We live in the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism. It has been a very violent period in human history. Hundreds of millions of people have fought and sacrificed valiantly to get the bosses, the landlords and the imperialists off their necks.



WW PHTO STEVAN KIRSCHBAUM

Deirdre Griswold

The terrible crises created by capitalism — especially the two world wars of the 20th century and the Great Depression — spurred on these revolutions until at one time about a third of the world's people lived in countries trying to build socialism.

Why were there setbacks?

In a nutshell, because world capitalism was still on the rise. It was developing the means of production. The workers in the imperialist countries were captive to the system even as they made some material gains. This gave the imperialists a free hand to bully, threaten and do great damage to revolutionary movements and countries.

But along with military pressures, there was another enormous factor: The revolutions all took place where capitalism was weak, usually where foreign imperialists kept the economies in a state of underdevelopment. In many of these countries, revolutionary uprisings were hastened by the horrors of war.

This is what drove these great mass upheavals forward — the material deprivation of the masses coupled with enormous repression and national humiliation.

As hard-fought as these victories were, the really hard part came after the revolution, when countries aspiring to socialism had to catch up to the powerful imperialist states.

Why do people fight? For a better life. By forcing revolutionary countries to spend enormous sums on defense, by saddling them with crippling economic sanctions, the imperialists denied the workers the fruits of their struggle and sacrifices. This undermined morale as it nourished bureaucracy and privilege.

The problems of our revolution are so different. For us, the hard part has been keeping alive the revolutionary spirit of Marxism and Leninism in a country that seemed insulated from the class struggle. But not any more. Workers know the class war is on.

What revolutionaries have to figure out now is how can our class most effectively break up the political and state power of the parasitic ruling class? That's no small task, but once it happens, the high productivity of labor here guarantees a rapid transition to a society of abundance that can help the whole world climb out of the hell that capitalism has created. □

Expanding Workers World newspaper

Excerpts are from a talk given by Gary Wilson, a managing editor of Workers World, at the Oct. 8-9 Workers World Party National Conference in New York City.

Twenty-five years ago, Sam Marcy, a founder of Workers World Party, wrote the book "High Tech, Low Pay: A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class."

There's a chapter just about the changing character of the working class. It starts with a story about Che Guevara's visit to New York to attend the U.N. General Assembly. Che was in a private meeting with progressives from the U.S. He was asked if a different administration in Washington would ease the hostility toward Cuba. Che replied that it depended on changes in the U.S. working class.

Sam says that most progressives in the U.S. had discounted the working class, so it was significant that Che saw that great changes in the U.S. are contingent on the working class.

Che was talking about a change in consciousness of the working class. Sam writes that this remained the most important factor for progress. And in the 1980s there was a shift in the social composition of the working class that would also mean a change in consciousness.

That's the working class we see on the move today. The change can be seen in the growing proportion of Black, Latino/a, Asian, Native, women, undocumented and lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer workers. But there's another part of this change that's equally important.

There's been a major reduction in the percentage of jobs for skilled workers and a corresponding increase in the number of jobs for semi-skilled and unskilled workers. That means a shift to lower-paying over higher-paying jobs.

It means there's been a decline of the traditionally more privileged workers and industries with higher wages and the creation of a vast pool of lower-paid workers and a generalized impoverishment of the working class.

Twenty-five years ago, when Sam was writing this, there was not yet a change in consciousness. No political movement had started that reflected the changing character of the working class.

Today, that working class has emerged and a movement has erupted.

Workers World newspaper plays a critical role. The capitalists not only control all the big media, they also control what you've been taught. They even tell you how you should think.

An independent press is essential

So a completely independent newspaper is essential not only to find out about what is happening, but also to learn how to see everything in an independent way — in a way that's in the interests of the working-class majority, not the narrow interests of the capitalists.

We've been swept into a wide variety of actions and struggles taking place all around the country. Occupy Wall Street has spread to some 900 cities. But there's more. A hunger strike by prisoners in California, for example. Prisons are big business with an enslaved workforce.

So there's all these struggles taking place, and we want to bring them all together, which we can do in the pages of the newspaper. By bringing all of these struggles together, we are able to build unity.

Of course the paper does more than that. The paper is foremost a voice for socialism. When we can unite the actions and struggles that are happening in cities and struggles around the country, showing that they are all acting for a common purpose, and putting this together with a socialist consciousness, then that's a real revolution.

This takes me to the second focus of Sam's book. We've talked about the low pay; now we'll look at the high tech. And one of the big changes in technology is the emergence of the Internet, which has become a dominant means of communication.

Our operations on the Internet were developed separately from the newspaper, but they are limited because of that separation. Yet as we can all see, the actions are on the Internet; the communications are there first.

We are now in the process of completely reorganizing Workers World newspaper so that it will publish first to the Web. It will be designed to be read on cell phones and tablets as well as computer screens. These changes will also mean that we won't be restricted to the weekly print schedule. Of course, we'll continue to have a printed newspaper. There are many reasons to have a printed newspaper, not least of which is reaching those who've been excluded by poverty from the high-tech economy.

Accelerating events in the streets may mean that we'll need to accelerate this change as well. All of us working on the paper would welcome such a necessity. □

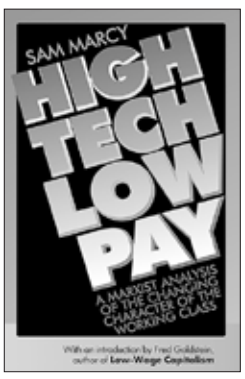
HIGH TECH, LOW PAY

A Marxist analysis of the changing character of the working class

In 1986 Sam Marcy wrote that the scientific-technological revolution is accelerating a shift to lower-paying jobs and to more women, Black and Latino/a workers. Using Marxism as a living tool, he analyzes the trends and offers strategies for labor including the occupation of plants.

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NUEVO CAPÍTULO DE UNA HISTORIA COMBATIVA

Estibadores aplauden cierre del puerto por Ocupar Oakland

Por Clarence Thomas

El escritor es miembro de la Junta Ejecutiva del Local 10 del sindicato de estibadores ILWU y co-presidente nacional del Movimiento Marcha del Millón de Trabajadores. El artículo fue escrito el 8 de noviembre.



MO/WW FOTO: BILL BOWERS

El 2 de noviembre los ojos del mundo estaban puestos en la ciudad de Oakland y la masiva marcha del pueblo al quinto puerto de buques portacontenedores más grande del país. Ese era el día de la Huelga General y Día de Acción Masiva convocadas por Ocupar Oakland. No sólo el movimiento de Ocupaciones se ha vuelto global, sino que Ocupar Oakland se ha convertido en el centro del movimiento. De hecho, el 28 de octubre manifestantes egipcios en pro de la democracia marcharon desde la Plaza Tahrir a la embajada de Estados Unidos en apoyo de Ocupar Oakland y en contra de la brutalidad policíaca que fue exhibida en Oakland el 25 de octubre y que comúnmente se experimenta en Egipto.

La sin precedente marea humana de decenas de miles de personas provenientes de una amplia sección de la comunidad, es la movilización popular independiente más importante en los Estados Unidos en lo que va del siglo XXI.

Esta convocatoria de huelga general fue en respuesta al ataque de estilo militar coordinado por 18 agencias de la policía en el Área de la Bahía que intentaron desalojar el campamento de Ocupar Oakland en la Plaza Oscar Grant, donde el veterano militar estadounidense Scott Olsen, quien sirvió dos períodos de servicio en Irak, fue herido por una bomba de gases lacrimógenos que fue disparada directamente a su cabeza por la policía de Oakland.

Esta convocatoria de una Huelga General no fue llamada por el movimiento sindical y quizás con razón, porque sólo el 12,9 por ciento de la fuerza laboral está sindicalizada. De hecho, en el sector privado sólo el 7,2 por ciento de los/as trabajadores/as está sindicalizado. Este es el porcentaje más bajo desde 1900.

Si bien es cierto que tardaría poco más de una semana para organizar una Huelga General en este país, el hecho es que el sector sindical no recibiría la bendición de sus amos del Partido Demócrata para tomar tal acción. Recordemos, los partidos Republicano y Demócrata están controlados por Wall Street y el 1 por ciento.

Las bases de los sindicatos sin embargo, están preparadas para tomar acciones militantes en su punto de producción o de servicios. El Local 1021 del sindicato SEIU fue capaz de obtener el día libre para sus trabajadores/as de la ciudad para que participaran en la acción de "dejar de trabajar" o para que no fueran requeridos/as a ir al trabajo por razones de salud ó seguridad.

Los dos últimos paros del puerto de Oakland sucedieron como resultado de la acción solidaria tomada por miembros del Local 10. La primera fue por la justicia para Oscar Grant, la acción — "Alto a la brutalidad policial, a la cárcel los policías asesinos" — donde los estibadores cerraron cinco puertos de la zona de la bahía el 23 de octubre de 2010.

El segundo cierre del puerto de Oakland fue la acción voluntaria de miembros de base del sindicato el 4 de abril de 2011 para cerrar el puerto de Oakland durante 24 horas en el aniversario del asesinato del Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. en solidaridad con la lucha de los trabajadores/as públicos/as de Wisconsin sobre la negociación colectiva.

El acuerdo de la Asamblea de Huelga de Ocupar Oakland afirma en su sitio Web www.occupyoakland.org la razón para cerrar el puerto de Oakland:

"Estamos haciendo esto para bloquear el flujo de capital el día de la Huelga General, y también para mostrar nuestro compromiso de solidaridad con los trabajadores estibadores en su lucha contra la EGT en Longview, Wash. EGT es una exportadora internacional de granos que está tratando de romper la jurisdicción de los estibadores. La fuerza propulsora detrás de la EGT es Bunge LTD, una destacada compañía de la industria agropecuaria y de alimentos que reportó ganancias de $2,4 mil millones en 2010; y esta compañía tiene conexiones fuertes con Wall Street. Éste es solamente un ejemplo del ataque corporativo de Wall Street contra los/as trabajadores/as. La Huelga General de Oakland mostrará las implicaciones del gran alcance que tiene el movimiento Ocupar Wall Street. El mundo entero está harto de la enorme disparidad en riquezas provocada por el sistema actual. Ahora es el momento cuando el pueblo está haciendo algo para cambiar la situación. La Huelga General es una señal de advertencia al 1 por ciento — que su riqueza solamente existe porque el 99 por ciento la crea para ellos".

La importancia del paro en el Puerto de Oakland fue que conectó los sindicatos, la comunidad y el Ocupar Oakland en una acción estratégica en el punto de producción. El cierre del puerto de Oakland no solamente tuvo un impacto en la transporte de cargamentos en el Pacífico, sino que también interrumpió los horarios de los ferrocarriles, de camiones y de los servicios de "entregar a tiempo" para compañías como Wal-Mart el 2 de noviembre.

El movimiento sindical debe desempeñar un papel de liderazgo para construir un amplio movimiento basado en la clase trabajadora que desafíe la dominación y el poder corporativo al avanzar una agenda del pueblo, como la que fue promulgada por el Movimiento Marcha de un Millón de Trabajadores/as en 2004, que incluye lo siguiente:

¡Alto a la codicia de las corporaciones!

¡No interferencia con el Seguro Social!

¡Recorten el presupuesto militar!

¡Cuidado de salud universal!

¡Dejen de desmantelar la educación pública!

¡Que regresen las tropas ya!

¡Alivio de impuestos para la clase trabajadora!

¡Anulen los tratados de libre comercio!

¡Amnistía para todos/as los/as trabajadores/as indocumentados/as!

¡Dejen de exportar empleos!

¡Conserven y restauren el medioambiente!

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Cumbre Socialista programada en Filadelfia

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

La rama del Partido World Party/ Mundo Obrero en Filadelfia celebró una Cumbre Socialista el sábado, 19 de noviembre, de 14 a 19:30 en la Iglesia Calvary, ubicada en la parte suroeste de la ciudad en la intersección de la calle 48 y Avenida Baltimore.

Uno de los propósitos principales de la Conferencia era abordar algunas de las preguntas fundamentales que se han planteado en el sitio de Ocupar Philly (OP) en la Plaza Dilworth del Ayuntamiento de la ciudad. El movimiento de ocupar ha cambiado el clima político en este país. Ha expuesto la naturaleza criminal del Estado capitalista, tanto en cómo el estado defiende a los explotadores ricos en contra de la pobre y explotada masa de trabajadores/as y, en muchas ciudades, cómo ha traído una brutal represión policíaca contra el movimiento.

Este movimiento, iniciado por jóvenes mayormente blancos/as que no ven un futuro para sí mismos/as, ha abierto una puerta a la posibilidad de un salto enorme en la conciencia de clase. Ha puesto de manifiesto la enorme brecha entre las clases con su lema de "el 99 por ciento frente al 1 por ciento". Los/as jóvenes han mostrado gran valor en poner en marcha las ocupaciones.

Las fuerzas revolucionarias pueden contribuir al ampliar la perspectiva política a fin de llegar al resto de la clase trabajadora y ayudar a traer elementos de las comunidades que han estado ausentes en el movimiento y que son esenciales para su éxito.

Este es el momento de pronunciarse claramente, de una forma popular, cuál es el papel del Estado y por qué la intolerancia anti-LGBT, el sexismo, el racismo y el odio antiinmigrante son enemigos de la unidad de la clase trabajadora. Sobre todo, tenemos que examinar lo que puede reemplazar al capitalismo y cómo sólo un sistema socialista puede traer justicia económica y social real.

En Filadelfia, los/as miembros del WWP/PMO han formado parte de Occupy Philly desde el primer día y han estado en animadas discusiones con muchas personas sobre una variedad de temas.

Esta ciudad es el hogar de Mumia Abu-Jamal, que lleva tres décadas en prisión después de ser víctima de un montaje en la muerte de un policía por la tristemente célebre policía de Filadelfia y la clase dirigente de la ciudad. Su caso debe ser parte del programa de OP, que debe tener presente el racismo omnipresente en una ciudad donde la mayoría son personas de color. La lucha de la comunidad de inmigrantes, trabajadores/as documentados/as e indocumentados/as, también debe ser parte de las exigencias de OP.

Estos son sólo algunos de los temas plasmados en el programa en esta Conferencia socialista. Sin embargo, el principal tema general fue sobre la absoluta bancarrota del sistema capitalista y la necesidad de socialismo, que no sólo es posible en este país sino inevitable, dado el alto nivel de productividad. La solidaridad internacional y poner fin a las guerras y ocupaciones estadounidenses en el mundo también son esenciales para las masas en este país.

Dos miembros de la Secretaría del WWP/PMO hablaron en la Conferencia: el primer secretario Larry Holmes y el miembro de la Secretaría Fred Goldstein, autor de "Capitalismo de bajos salarios". Otros oradores eran Pam Africa de la Familia y Amigos Internacionales Interesados en Mumia Abu-Jamal y Susan Abulhawa, autora palestina de "Amaneceres en Jenín". □